

#235 HERB WEATHERWAX

298th INFANTRY REGIMENT, SURVIVOR

INTERVIEWED ON

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TRANSCRIBED BY:

CARA KIMURA

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Robert Chenoweth (RC): The following oral history interview was conducted by Robert Chenoweth for the National Park Service, USS ARIZONA Memorial at the Sheraton Waikiki, on December 4, 1996, at eleven a.m. The person being interviewed is Herbert Weatherwax, who was with the 298th Infantry Regiment on December 7, 1941.

For the record, will you please state your full name, place of birth and date of birth?

Herbert Weatherwax (HW): My name is Herb Weatherwax and I was born in Honolulu on June 3, 1917.

RC: So, also for the record, you considered Honolulu to be your hometown in 1941?

HW: -- yes.

RC: Okay. I'd like you to start off by telling me a little bit about your coming into the service, when that happened, and events -- your military history leading up to December 7.

HW: I'll be happy to do that. -- I was one of the draftees. At that time, [a] year before the Pearl Harbor attack, the draft law took place and I was caught in the third draft and inducted into the Army on June 6, 1941. I had my basic training at Schofield Barracks, that took about three months and then I was assigned to the 298[th] Infantry, Regiment, 2nd Battalion, headquarters.

We --- I did [a] lot of field training prior to the attack [*on*] Pearl Harbor. And I'd like to mention that two weeks or approximately two weeks [*10 days*] before the Pearl Harbor attack, the army was alerted, and by that we were taken to our designated areas [*of defense*]. [*An area from the Makapuu Lighthouse at*] Waimanalo, to Chinaman Hat at Waiahole district. And we stayed out there [*one week*] getting prepared [*for an invasion by Japan.*] I was in the communication [*section*] and I [*helped to lay*] telephone lines from one end [*of the area*] to the other, we had everything established just about [*one week*] after that.

There were a group of us that was sent back to Schofield Barracks. They just left a skeleton crew out at the positions that were prepared. And I had a chance to go home for a weekend pass. And it was on that Sunday morning while I was on weekend pass that [/] heard [*an*] explosion, and wondered what was happening. I looked up at the sky and towards the direction

of Pearl Harbor, there were all the black puffs [*of smoke*]. It was a bright morning. It was a nice morning, and I could see all those [*black*] puffs. And then [/] heard, over the radio, that, "Calling all military personnel to report to their stations immediately." That, "The Japanese have attacked Pearl Harbor, "This is war!"

And naturally [/] was shocked. And at that time, we had our bus station at the Army and Navy YMCA, which is located right in Honolulu. As we were traveling over to Schofield Barracks, where I was stationed at that time, I passed Aiea Heights and looked down into Pearl Harbor. I had a panoramic view of the destruction. The *ARIZONA* was just [*ablaze*] in flames. All the other ships were afire and what stood up in my mind was that the *OKLAHOMA* had capsized. I saw the sailors aboard the hull of the ship just scrambling [*around*]; the water was on fire. And I was shocked, needless to say. And we were -- we didn't know what was going on, really. We knew that something drastic had happened.

On my way to Schofield Barracks, [*passing*] Wheeler Field. All of the American planes, the fighter planes were all lined up, and demolished. They had them all just right in line. And it had been strafed by the Japanese at that time. It just knocked all of those airplanes. I don't think any of those planes ever was able to get off the ground. And that was another shock to me.

We got to Schofield Barracks. We heard that they had strafed the barracks there. We didn't hear about any casualties. Everything was so sudden.

We got [*on our truck*] and went [*on*] to the Windward side and back to our [*camp*]. [*Where*] we were prepared. In a way, the Army, I think, was prepared for something. And the way I look at it, it was a sea invasion. We were expecting the Japanese Navy to come and invade us by sea. But it turned out they did invade us, but it was by air [*instead*], that was a total surprise. I just couldn't get over it.

And now, on that side that we were stationed at, [*called the Windward area*], The Kaneohe Naval Air Station was the first that was bombed. As the Japanese planes came over, they bombed that station and then carried on into Pearl Harbor. Of course, there were others that went directly to Pearl Harbor, [*and*] there were some that went to Bellows Field and to different targets.

And so I saw the planes [*and hangers that were damaged*], the Naval Air Station had lot of PBY's. They were all patrol planes. And I saw them all destroyed on the ground, and I don't think . . .

RC: Where was your position? Where was your battalion's position?

HW: We were right in Kailua. There's a Kailua area. We have Waimanalo, Kailua and on, Kaneohe, and further on. That was the area that we were in for defense. And . . . [*the 298th Infantry Regiment, My 2nd Battalion Headquarters was at the junction of Maunawili and Kamehameha Highway, a banyon grove.*]

RC: Could you talk to me a little bit about the work that you did prior to the attack in preparing your position?

HW: Oh yes.

RC: Did you dig bunkers? Did you have machine guns in place?

HW: [*Yes. I did not dig bunkers. I helped to lay telephone lines to outposts all along the coast, from the lighthouse in Waimanalo to Waiahole, where the Chinamans Hat Island is located offshore.*]

RC: What sort of activity?

HW: Well, what we had done was [*make preparations for defense*] -- we had our machine gun positions all set in designated area and had observation points where they could observe the horizon from an upper level to see a little further beyond the horizon. And the Headquarters Company was located, at the time, in an area they call the Maunawili section. And there were a lot of banyan [*and mango*] trees there, we were underneath of [*the*] banyan trees. As I said earlier that I was in the communication, the telephone [*section then*]. We laid all the lines from one point to the other [*Waimanalo to Waiahole*], and brought it over to [*a central location*.] All the telephone lines [*were brought*] to this area where we had [*our*] telephone switchboards.

Later, I got to be a switchboard operator. And I was on the switchboard when they first reported [*the*] capturing [*of*] the submarine, the two-man submarine that was in Waimanalo. We got word that the submarine had beached itself and they had

captured this one Japanese crewman and one of 'em was dead. And I think that got to be the first prisoner of war, as far the Japanese were concerned.

RC: Ensign Sakamaki.

HW: [Yes].

RC: Kazuo Sakamaki.

HW: [*I listened to the report and was able to*] eavesdrop at [*that*] time. As an operator, we had [*an*] old telephone [*portable switchboard*] system, where you had to plug in [*a jack*] from one [*connection*] to the other. I could get in [*on*] all the conversation, and so I was [*able*] to listen to that part of the history.

RC: Backing up a little bit . . .

HW: Yes, sir.

RC: . . . when you first came to basic training, could you talk about that? Who actually conducted the training? Was it the 25th division, or 24th division that conducted your training?

HW: I don't know exactly what division it was. [*It was*] the [*division*] that [*had the taro leaf insignia.*] The cadre that [*trained us was*] from that division. [*There*] were pretty hard-boiled non-commissioned officers. I [*will not*] forget the training. Basic training is the training that will make men out of boys. And I think it did that to me too, because prior to that, I was really undisciplined.

RC: But you were not a young man. You were not just out of high school.

HW: No, -- I had just made my twenty-fourth birthday. And I was a little older than most of the other draftees, but you must understand, when they did draft [*us*], it was by numbers and within a certain age limit. And I happen[*ed*] to be one of the older ones that was selected. I was [*employed by*] the Hawaiian Electric Company. That was the outfit I was working for. And I must have been one of the last employees that was drafted into the Army, [*from that company. After the Japanese attack, the workers from the company were essential to the company. They were exempted from the draft.*]

RC: Essential worker.

HW: . . . and they never did draft any other [*electrician from the company.*] So I feel that I was one of the luckiest one that managed to be drafted because I have no regrets on anything that [*happened*] in my life.

RC: And you had mentioned to me earlier that you also, along with many of Japanese ancestry when you were drafted, there was a lot of . . .

HW: Yes.

RC: . . . Japanese . . .?

HW: [Yes.] Well, in Hawaii, at [*that*] time, [*there were many*] nationalities. We [*were*] a hodgepodge of different ethnic groups, and everybody was just friends to one another. We grew up together and we went to school together and played together, so this was a common matter and a lot of the Japanese boys were drafted, as well as I was. See, [*many*] of them were drafted. There were [*many*] of them that were in [*the*] National Guard outfit prior to being activated to the federal [*service*]. They were [*our*] non-commissioned officers. But the others that were drafted along with me were just about my age or just a little younger. So we had -- in the 298th infantry, we had a big group of Japanese boys, as well as Filipinos, Chinese, all different nationalities.

After six months out on the field, we were sent back to Schofield Barracks and replaced by another unit, because they kept about six months period there. And then when we got to Schofield Barracks, they were worried that they were [*transferring*] the Japanese or anyone with a Japanese name or if they were Japanese, [*out of our regiment.*]

RC: This is -- you're talking about after the attack?

HW: After the attack, [*yes*]. After the attack. When I got wind that they were going to do that, take the Japanese boys out, I figured that [*it was*] a big mistake because I felt that the 298th infantry was one of the best fighting units. We were prepared. We were trained well for defense. But as soon as we got word that that happened, our morale went down.

RC: What other regiments were there in Hawaii that had been federalized, besides the 298?

HW: [*The 17th, 35th ect. We never mingled so really do not know.*] We didn't mingle around much so I had no real idea about that. I transferred [*to the 220th Signal Corps.*]

RC: So you stayed basically doing security type work after the attack for about five or six months?

HW: Well, when we got sent back to Schofield Barracks, it was for rest and recreation. We were going to just take it easy. We ended up doing quartermaster work. We started to go down to the storage areas, picking up can [*goods etc.*], even the [*storing of*] barbed wire.

I remember going down to the storage and picking up those big barbed wire rolls, and that's -- to an infantry man -- that was a demeaning thing, really. We weren't very happy. The whole troops weren't very happy about it.

When it came time to -- when the rumor was that the Japanese were going to be taken out and sent to the mainland, our morale just broke down. We just never had a [*good*] unit [*again*]. And I figured that in my particular case, might as well get out of there, -- being an electrician -- I went to the Signal Corps and asked the [*officer*] in charge if they needed an electrician. [*I asked him*] to put a request from there to [*my*] infantry [*unit*], which they did. And I remember my company commander wasn't too happy about that when I was transferred. He asked me why I wanted to do that, but it was because of [*the*] lack of morale [*I was transferred to*] the Signal Corps, the 220 Signal Corps, in Fort Shafter. And I remained there and I got my promotion pretty fast . . .

RC: Was the 220th a signal company or a battalion?

HW: Signal company. It was just a small unit. The main purpose of the 220th was to do repair work, do a lot of electrical and communication repair work. What we did there, when the invasion started to take place down in the South Pacific, we did a lot of repair work [*on*] the signal equipment. I was put in charge of [*preparing*] the coaxial cable that was used in the radar system. It was sort of primitive at the time, but they depended on somebody they felt could be responsible for it, and so I was in charge of that, in wiring those coaxial cable. I stayed there until

I got the rank [*of*] Staff Sergeant, and I felt that's the limit that I could get to, so I [*decided to move on.*]

RC: What was your rank at the time of the attack, when you were in .

..

HW: I was a buck private.

RC: A buck private.

HW: Yeah. All the draftees that came in at that time never had a chance to [*be promoted*]. It was those that had been in the National Guard, [*that*] were given all the ranks. In the Army, you don't just get promoted right at the beginning. But in the Signal Corps, I just rose [*in rank*] pretty fast. I got from the rank of buck private up to Staff Sergeant within a year and a half. And then I looked at the highest rank that was there, the [*Technical*] Sergeant, and it looked like the Tech[*nical*] Sergeant wasn't going to leave very shortly, so I applied for aviation cadet. And was accepted.

And then I was [*transferred*] to Keesler Field, Mississippi, outside of Biloxi. I thought I was going to be a pilot, a hero and I was looking forward to training. I wanted so much to be a fighter pilot. I don't know why. Now, I look at it, it's not the best thing to be a fighter pilot. But at that time, that's what I wanted to be.

But then, while I was on leave, things came about [*that the Army was*] shipping all of the aviation cadets into the infantry. The ones that had [*an*] infantry background, was sen [*back*] to the infantry. And I was sent to Camp Shelby, [*Mississippi*] to the 69th division, 272nd infantry regiment. And there, I found that we were just across the street from the 442nd infantry. [*It was*] a big unit and I thought maybe I'd see some of the Japanese boys that I knew that was with me in the 298th, [*I found none.*]

RC: Now so, what year was this?

HW: This was in [*1944*].

RC: So had the 100th battalion already gone to [*Africa?*]

HW: [*Yes*], they had already been taken out of Schofield, sent over Wisconsin, Camp McCoy. -- some of my friends got to be trained as interpreters, [*in*] Japanese, [*who were*] sent over to the Pacific to help the troops there. And then the others formed

[the] 100th Battalion and I understand, they were sent over to Africa. And then, after that campaign, they [*returned to form*] the 442nd [Regimental Combat Team], it was the 100th Battalion members [*who*] were the cadre of the 442nd.

We were there for a short while and I can't remember whether they left first or we left first. We did leave Camp Shelby *in* [November 1944]. We took the train to New Jersey. They had the staging area there. And then from there, we were -- we moved by ship from New York Harbor and went across that North Sea to England, to the southern part of England. And that was quite an experience. The trip over, in the North Sea, that was [*a rough one.*] high waves and cold, and then we had the fear of being torpedoed by the Germans. The Germans were active at the time. All the submarines were active out there. They were [*sinking*] a lot of troop ships and lot of supply ships. But we got through that, [*okay.*]

And then over to England, to Plymouth Harbor. And we stayed there for a short while [*at*] the staging area, [*where the troops had*] already [*left for*] the Normandy invasion. And so we occupied the area where those troops [*were*].

And then, in the early part of '45, we were sent over to Europe, and we landed [*at*] Le Havre, and then [*on*] through France. We stayed over in a chateau in France for a short while. And then from there we caught the Forty and Eight train [*which*] was notable during the First World War. It carried forty man and eight horses [*then*]. [*We did not have any horses.*] [*We*] had straws as our bedding, and we were just jam packed like sardines in there.

[*We crossed*] France, to Belgium, [*then*] to Brussels. Then from Brussels we got on a convoy and we moved to Aachen. When I was -- when we got there, we got into Aachen. At that time, Aachen was still on fire, was still burning. And St. Vith was another area that the Germans and the Americans had [*fought*] in. And we bivouacked in [*the*] Eiffel Forest.

I stayed in [*the*] Eiffel Forest. [*It*] was the worst winter they ever had [*for a long*] time. And I remember very well that we couldn't have a fire, we couldn't do anything in that respect to keep warm, except to put all the clothing that we had on. And I had a lot of clothing [*to keep warm.*] [*No*] bath for one whole month. And my foot -- I had trench foot. My foot was all full of sores in between my toes and the medics just gave me

[ointment] to put on my toes and that's all. And I lived through it that way. It was the most miserable thing and my toes were all numb. In fact, they're still numb until today. I still have pain when it's so cold. *[When the]* temperature get down just a few degrees my toes are just like snowballs, or something like that. It's cold. But I managed to survive it. I saved all my toes; many of the others had to amputate their toes. But I still have mine yet and I've learned from that experience to take care of *[my]* feet. And the Army *[taught]* the infantryman to take care of *[our]* feet. Your feet is *[an]* important part of your body, and I'm still with that in mind.

[In the forrest] we were located between the bombardments of both sides. *[We]* had artillery fire over our heads that was going continuously, on and on. So we had to dig in the ground to get cover, in case there was a short burst, we wouldn't be casualties. And from there, we moved over to -- I had orders to move ahead. I just want to mention too *[that]*, after *[the]* snow, after the cold, the *[ground thawed and]* slush started. Mud started to *[form]*. Now, that added on to our misery.

[We crossed the] the Sigfried line, my first job as we move across was *[on]* the removal of the mines, *[on the road that]* the Germans had *[laid in]* the road when they retreated. And I was the sergeant in charge of that, clearing the minefields so that our trucks could get through. And we just walked right down the line *[with our detectors.]* But fortunately, we could see where the mines were laid, because it was fresh ground. *[What]* we did was just get out there and hook on our *[rope]* and yank *[them]* out. And so that was my part in the infantry at the time, *[it]* was to take care of the mines and blow up all the ammunition that we captured. We captured the German dumps, ammunition dumps. And *[since]* their shells *[did not]* fit our weapons, so the thing to do *[was]* destroy *[them]*. We just used incendiary bombs *[and gasoline]* to blow *[them]* all up. Then we come across the anti-aircraft installations that they had around the cities and we destroyed all of them. We pile~~d~~ up all their ammunition right around the weapon and set fire to it and blew it all up. And that's the way we kept going. And that was in my *[job]*. We provide the ammunition for *[our platoon]*, we kept working that way and went on and on.

And of course, needless to say, there were a lot of casualties, *[and]* death. I've seen lot of death and now *[when]* I look back, I *[wonder]* why should we ever get into anything like that *[again]*. But at that time -- I just want to mention this to you too -- that

we were trained in the military [*to kill*] and we [*turned*] to be animals. We weren't human beings. I look at it from this point of view, because we thought like animals. Death was nothing at all to us. -- as long as it was an enemy [*in*] death. [*When*] we saw [*an*] American [*dead*], we felt awful because we could picture ourselves as being there, in that person's boots. But the enemies, we could make fun of it sometimes. There were cases, incidents I remember when we were traveling down and this German was dead alongside the road, with his arms outstretched. And someone went ahead and put a cigarette in[between] his [*fingers*]. And we thought that was [*funny*]. These are the kinds of things that [*happened*], I'm saying that we were animals. We didn't think like a normal person. [*The uniform made the difference.*]

[*We crossed the Rhine River and on to*] Leipzig and then passed on to the Elbe River. And it was at [*the*] town of Torgau that we heard the Russians were across the river from us. And then we heard the Russians had come across a pontoon bridge they had built. I had a chance to get down on the bank and met a Russian soldier. [*We*] had a picture taken [*together.*]

(Taping stops, then resumes)

RC: . . . and then we'll come back to Hawaii in 1941. And I want to talk to you a little bit more about the things you saw and activity at that time.

HW: Okay, at the Elbe River, we had a short contact with the Russians. And I noticed that [*the*] German people were all coming towards our side of the line. They were avoiding the Russians. They heard just before [*that*] the Russians [*were*] coming, they were crossing the rivers in droves to get away from the Russians. There was one father that came over to us and pleaded with us to take their daughter back with us. They didn't want to leave their daughter there. They were afraid that the Russians were going to do something to her. But we couldn't do that.

There were many [*Germans*] that wanted food. They came around our *kitchen while we ate.*] We retraced our track to the west and then from there [*to*] a little town of Hohenmolsen [*there*] we got word that the war had ended. [*Then rumors were building up that we were going on to the*] Pacific for the invasion of Japan. But then, shortly after that, the Japan conflict ended after the atomic bomb blast. And so, here we were happy

because we were able to get discharged [*soon.*] I was [*transferred to Bremen, and then*], to join the 29th infantry [*at Bremerhaven.*]

And from there, -- I left at the Port of Antwerp, [*and*] took the transport back to Boston [*then*] we got on the train and traveled across the [country], to [*California.*] [*It*] took seven days [*by ship*] to get to Hawaii. I got my discharge on December 10, 1945 I think it was on the tenth of '45. [*Then I returned to*] civilian life again.

RC: Did you continue to work as an electrician?

HW: [Yes]. Hawaiian Electric took [*me*] back as an electrician, but then I was already spoiled by the military and I couldn't settle down in that type of life. And they were paying me thirty cents an hour at the time. And I climbed a 330-foot pole radio tower for thirty cents an hour and stayed up there seven hours a [*each*] day, and that was quite something. But it was a job, it was worth it.

Then I went to school. -- I took advantage of [*the G.I. Bill.*]. And was accepted [*at*] the State University of Iowa, at Iowa City. My dad was from Iowa, so I stayed with my aunt [in Waterloo].

I didn't complete high school [*and 12 years had gone by*]. So I decided that wasn't for me. [*Too hard.*]

I went to a trade school in Chicago, the Coyne Electrical School. The Army [*service*] played a very important part because [/ *received*] a sixty-five dollars allowance [a month] and they took care of my tuition, and the cost of my room [*rent*]. I worked for the post office to supplement [*my*] income. I [*received*] five dollars a day from the post office. [*I was*] paid [*a*] dollar-quarter an hour, which wasn't too bad, [*for*] four hours a day. So I survived that way. I had enough.

And then, when I was through, I tried to decide whether I was going to stay in Chicago or [*return*] home [to Hawaii]. But I went through winter in Chicago and summer in Chicago, I said, "I'd be stupid to stick around here." (Chuckles)

So I caught the [*passenger liner Matsonia to return home.*] I paid \$125 [*for the*] trip from Los Angeles to Honolulu.

[I then was employed by] Hawaiian Dredging Company. I went over to [work at Kwajalein, and Subic Bay in the] Philippines. I was -- my last job working for anyone was at the Philippines, we were just preparing the Cubi Point, Marine [Navy] air field. It was jungle when we got there. [The Seabees cut the mountain down], [and] we dredged the harbor so that the ships could float right up to the dock. [We] used all [the dredged] material to extend [the airfield] runway. I had gotten married, about six months [before so I thought that]; "This is not the life for a married person."

So I left that company and I came back [*home*.] The company wanted to send me to Kuwait. And I didn't want to go to Kuwait, or any place else. I left a good job to come home. And then, I decided, why not start my own business. They needed electrical services in my community. I was trained for that purpose, so I started [*Weatherwax Electrical Service*]. And I've never regretted that. I don't know how I managed to survive, to this day. But I did survive.

Now my son [*has taken*] over the business, after I retired at the age of sixty-five. I'm seventy-nine and a half [*years old*]. My son is doing good with his business and everybody's happy. I'm a happy man. Just one of the happiest persons in this world, really.

RC: Let's go back a little bit.

HW: Okay.

RC: Back to 1941 again and you talked about driving back to Schofield Barracks and seeing the destruction at Pearl Harbor. What happened when you got back to the barracks? What, were you issued your rifles or equipment, and what exactly did you do?

HW: *[I returned to Schofield, I changed to my combat uniform, received my weapon and duffel bag with our other belongings].* But at the time, everything was already established on our [*defensive*] position, with the exception of the barbed wire. When I left before the attack the barbed wire wasn't strewn along side of the beach. When I got back, the barbed wire was just put up to deter the [*enemy landing*] troops.

RC: What were you thinking? Were you thinking that the Japanese were just right over the horizon and maybe going to come?

HW: Definitely, [Yes.]

RC: How did people feel?

HW: Oh, we were expecting the Japanese to invade, the next morning. Our headquarters was located where the machine gun company [*was*]. And every morning, they went out to their [*defensive*]. For six months, we were expecting the Japanese to invade. Well, I tell you, the first night; everybody was on hair trigger. They were shooting at anything. Anything that made a noise in the bush got shot at.

And I remember this one incident [*well*. *I*] had to go [*in the bush to pea*] at night. [*As*] I was walking back, [*I stepped on*] dry mango leaves [*that crackled*]. It made a little noise. I heard [“Who’s there?”] I kept walking and then I heard this officer say, “Who goes there?”

I looked up, I said, “Me.”

And he cussed me out. He said when he challenged me and I never answered, “I was about ready to shoot you.”

He had his gun [*out*], he was so scared. See, this is the thing. [*He was*] thinking about saboteurs and all of those things [*were*] in [*our*] mind.

RC: Did you hear any of that? Did you hear any reports that there was paratroopers or saboteurs, or anything like that?

HW: No, we didn’t. We didn’t have anything. Really, I didn’t think [*that*] there was a big concern at all. But I heard, at [*later*] through my wife, that where she was living in Hilo, this one Japanese person that was from Japan. He was out [*in his yard in*] his Japanese kimono, with the rising sun in the back, and he’s looking up in the sky, and he was just ranting off [“Banzai, Banzai”]. And so he must have been expecting something like that [*to happen*]. This was on the island of Hawaii, in Hilo. And he was arrested, right after that.

Now, I would like to mention one other incident that I think a lot of people don’t realize, that we did have an Army transport by the name of *ROYAL T. FRANK*, that [*was*] used to take our troops from Honolulu Harbor to Hilo. And the reason for that was for rest and recreation. The troops went out to Volcano area [*on*

the Islands of Hawaii]. [That was] a military recreational area. [The] ROYAL T. FRANK [an Army transport ship] did that for years and years.

[It was on January 28, 1942] that [the] ROYAL T. FRANK disappeared. Nothing was heard about it. And they assumed that a Japanese submarine had sent a torpedo and sunk it, with all [it's] crew [and passengers, soldiers]. I don't think there were any survivors at all. It just disappeared from the face of the earth. I do remember that.

Another thing I want to point out is that when the Japanese attacked, they left all the oil tanks [*and repair shops*] in Pearl Harbor intact. They didn't *bomb them*. [*There was a*] hammerhead crane, which was a large crane, right [*on*] the [*dock*] very visible. They never *bomb[ed it.]* [*It played an important role in salvage work.*

]

We had ammunition depots [in Iwalei] and [*no bomb*] was sent in [*that*] direction, so my opinion is that they were [*planning*] to come back and take Hawaii, and use Hawaii as a stepping stone to the mainland. Thank god it didn't happen. I think the Battle of Midway was the one that stopped them from doing that.

RC: Thinking back, after all this time, for you, being a member of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association, why is this event, this attack on Pearl Harbor, the beginning of the war? Why is it important? Why should people care about that?

HW: I think, the people of America should realize that we cannot let our guard down at all. Let that be a lesson, because prior to that [*attack*], our, American nation, was divided. We had elements that wanted to remain aloof against any conflict. They believed that we could isolate ourselves away from all the things that [*was*] happening throughout the world. Now, I just want to sort of let it be known that [*it did not*] happen that way there. We had to support our armed forces. Armed forces [*was*], very important. Without our armed forces, we have nothing. And for anybody to start saying about cutting back on our armed forces, my own opinion is that it's wrong thinking. We have to, be alert; we got to be awake [*and ready*].

RC: Do you think that the events of December 7 could have been avoided?

HW: Well, I don't think [so]. There have been [many] things said [right] after [it] happened, you know, every[one] has hindsight, it's 100 percent [right] all the time. I think this was just meant to be. President Roosevelt was aware of all these kinds of things. I think they were aware of the tension that was being built, but with this attack on Pearl Harbor, personally, my opinion [is it] was unavoidable. It was something that was to happen and it did happen. There's no way. There's no planning at all to have this happen. Yeah.

RC: Okay. One of the things I'd like to recommend, I'll go ahead and do it on the tape because -- I think it would be worthwhile if our service could set aside some time with you to take, to have you take us around to the places that were your positions, that you can remember where those places were -- where the 298th built their defensive positions, what kind of activities went on, because I think it's a very important part of Hawaii's history, but also the history associated with the attack and preparation for defense of the islands, because it is a part of the story that's not well-known. Most of the focus is on the activities inside Pearl Harbor, some of the air activities, but primarily what was going on with the ships. And I think that you reminded us that it's very important to remember the Army role in this whole story and the fact that it was, in fact, the Army's responsibility to defend the Hawaiian Islands. Not only with the Air Forces and the anti-aircraft and coast artillery, but also with the infantry, in case there was an actual assault on the islands. So it's (inaudible) was part of the system of defense. So I think we need to understand more about --- we know a lot about the fixed positions -- the coast artillery batteries and the observation positions. And that story is fairly well documented at the Army museum at Fort DeRussy, but there's also that part of the mobile history that's not very well documented. And I think you would be a good person to help fix some of those action places.

HW: I will always be available. I'm so happy that I can be of any help

RC: Okay, that's great.

HW: Yeah, I'm available. I have all the time in the world, and I'm free. And like I mentioned to my wife, I'm happy, joyous and free at this stage of life. And no matter what they do, they can't change that attitude.

RC: Okay, good. Thanks.

END OF INTERVIEW